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Rome's Modern Claims.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN ST. MARK'S CHURCH, ST. JOHN, N. B.,

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, 1874,

BY THE

REV. HENRY OVERY, B. A., OXON,

Assistant Minister of St. Mark's, St. John, N. B.,
and late Curate of Cullcompton, England.

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SERMON.

And Jesus answering said unto them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."—*St. Mark* xii. 17.

"The State will, I trust, be ever careful to leave the domain of religious conscience free, and yet to keep to its own domain, and to allow neither private caprice, nor above all foreign arrogance, to dictate to it in the discharge of its proper office." [*Vide* Mr. Gladstone's Pamphlet on "the Vatican Decrees," &c., reviewed in *Times*, Nov. 7, 1874.]

It is not usual, nor am I aware that it is wise, generally to depart in our public teaching from that course of sound instruction which our Church has so carefully and so regularly laid down for our spiritual guidance, wherein either the Gospel or the Epistle of the day, or one of the Lessons appointed to be publicly read, usually furnishes a preacher with ample scope for choosing a text and subject which may admirably tend to edify a congregation. It is, perhaps, still more unusual from the Pulpit to enter the domain of the Politician and consider questions which, nominally at least, appear to fall within his line of thought and jurisdiction. And yet occasions will occur wherein it would be unwise—wherein it would be neglectful—wherein it would be even *culpable*—to cast no light from the Word of God on questions which must, from time to time, press for an answer from every thoughtful mind, and to refuse to speak with something like decision on matters which, whether the clergy discuss them or not, *are* being discussed, and will be discussed, in the street, in the news-room, and in the household. Here it is our privilege—within the sacred precincts of God's house—to view, in the calm light of unprejudiced and inspired Truth, questions which

elsewhere are often but lit up with the lurid flame of passion, and afterwards sink into that darkness and oblivion which ignorance of the real matter at issue casts around them.

Such an occasion was that presented in our text when the ecclesiastical Pharisees and the political Herodians, watching that they might lay hold of our blessed Lord and entangle Him in His talk, proposed to Him the question whether it was lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not. At such a time for our Lord to have refused an answer would have been an occasion of triumph for the enemy, and His refusal would have left blank one of the pages of the Holy Gospel, which has been most filled with calm wisdom and practical suggestion for the solving of the extremely difficult relationship of Church and State. Any timid fear of trenching upon political questions would have rendered our blessed Lord still worthy of the adoration of religious and devout souls, but the area of His domain over human hearts and affairs would have been narrowed, and we should all have felt that there was one department of human life, even the political, across which the Light of the World had not cast His illuminating and cheering rays. As it is, all is different, and from this very abode, wherein God's honour dwells, we shall not hesitate to pronounce an opinion on a similar question to that proposed to our Lord, now occupying public attention in the religious and political world; and though it were presumption to expect for the wisdom of the Divine Master to guide us in the consideration of its details, we may humbly trust to be guided by His Spirit in reflecting *this*, His *own* wisdom. An opinion publicly given is but the opinion of an insignificant unit amid the many voices of this world, and the only strength that it can possess is by virtue of its expressing the *Truth*, which comes with mighty and all-convincing power to the hearts of all men

sooner or later. My voice can but this morning bear witness to the Truth, and in so far as it does so, it is worthy, my brethren, of your acceptance and of your belief; in so far as it fails to do so, I can but pray God that it may lose even a transitory influence over you, so that in all things His glory may be advanced and the salvation of men may be promoted, for we can do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth.

I will no longer delay telling you that it is of the growing power of the Roman Catholic Church, her claim to territorial possessions, and her assumption of Infallibility for her Chief Officer and Ruler that I am intending to speak. But herein let me disarm any from fear of my speaking with bitterness, or sectarian, or clerical feeling. *This* is not the place, in a free country, where *all* professions of religion are (partly happily, partly unhappily) left without the smile or frown of the State, to adopt any iconoclastic or exclusive principles, and from one pulpit to declaim the teachings of another, least of all those of the Church of Rome, which, as still holding the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and salvation by His name, claims for its error our pity and sorrow rather than our invective and hatred. Would to God that she extended the same hand of charity and tolerance to us that we hold out to her!

You cannot be ignorant, my brethren, of the history of the past few years, or how, with the apparent failure of the Church of Rome in Italy, she has sought power elsewhere, and pushed the decrees of the Vatican to the very verge of presumption. Unsatisfied with promulgating the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, the Roman Church has gone farther in her bold claims, that we call them not pretensions, and has inculcated the doctrine of the Infallibility of the Pope, with, as we think, its terrible and necessary adjuncts of interference with the loyalty and

independence of private citizens. To go farther back, some of you will remember the popular demonstrations of 1848, when France was the theatre of the world, and the world stood gazing at her actors. You may remember that popular meetings were held all over the United States to hail the omen of coming Democratic power. The Pope gave these meetings his sympathy. The omen, however, was not fulfilled, and since that time the Roman Church, under the counsels of the Jesuits, has been striving in every way to centralize its power in the hands of the nominal head of the Church. Unaided by any Council, the Pope, in 1854, proclaimed the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary; in other words, her entire freedom from original sin, which, by its audacity, shocked many of Rome's staunchest members. So greatly did it shock even her still acquiescing members, that, in a sort of Liberal Catholic Congress, held in August, 1863, the Count de Montalembert found countenance when he said, "The liberty of conscience is, in my eyes, the most precious, the most sacred, the most legitimate, the most necessary." Yet he adds, "I must admit that this enthusiastic devotion for religious liberty, which animates me, is not general among the Catholics." These, a Roman Catholic's opinions, were unfriendly to the Jesuits, and to Ultramontane or advanced Rome. Then followed the famous encyclical letter of 1864, in which a formal rebuke was dealt against this Liberal Congress at which the Duke de Montalembert had given his opinion. Attached to the letter was a syllabus, or list of popular errors, to which the Pope wished to affix his condemnatory seal. The Pope condemned the doctrine "*that the Church has no right to employ force;*" in other words, he approved of the Church using force. He condemned "*that the Church should be separated from the State;*" in fact, no Catholic was to teach this doctrine. He virtually condemned "*that other religions than the*

Roman Catholic should be considered the only religion of the State;" in other words, he condemned the union of the Protestant Church of England with the State. He virtually disapproved of the tolerance by Roman Catholics of the profession by foreigners of their own religion in Roman Catholic countries; in other words, he almost refused to grant to *Protestant bodies* (nay, we make bold to say he would, at this hour, refuse within his own domain to grant to Protestant bodies) that asylum for the exercise of their conscientious opinion, which is, at this day, granted to the members of his own flock within the territory of free and happy England,—England that has almost opened her arms to welcome the Jesuits legally ejected by a continental power.

I would have you, my brethren, clearly understand Rome's position, not for purposes of attack, but of defence, and that you may be enabled, as free men, to give an answer for any policy of defence that you may assume, or that you may influence others to assume, by your own mild yet firm and conscientious position. Rome claims *power*, power to bless and to anathematize; claims power to define what shall be believed and what shall be rejected; is exclusive against all opinions but her own, and by her decrees, if not by the spirit of her better and more liberal clergy, demands an unhesitating and unswerving subjection of mind and heart and conscience on the part of her followers. But her claims do not end here. She has now proclaimed, by the mouth of her chief officer, that his dictum is infallible; in other words, that his utterances, *be what they may*, are to be received as the utterances of inspired power. *Infallible*, my brethren! One had thought the word has never had a meaning in our erring world except as applied to Him who, as Judge of the Earth, can never err. *Infallible*, my brethren! when day by day is shewing that all our words and deeds, nay,

our very life, is but rounded with error. *Infallible*, the Pope of Rome infallible,—in his utterances and decrees, should he declare obedience to the Queen and her ministers illegal, should he declare the voice of conscience in you or in me to be a mere fancy of our wandering minds compared with his own. It is a doctrine to be rejected by Catholics; to be despised by Protestants; to be trampled under foot of any man who seeks to keep a conscience void of offence, and does not desire to make perilous shipwreck of faith, conscience, and soul all together.

There are then some things which may not be rendered even to an Apostolic Cæsar, for the very reason that they belong to God. "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." You will here notice that the boundary line between civil and moral, or political and spiritual allegiance* is clearly marked. There is that which belongs to Cæsar; there is that which belongs to God. In our Lord's time, the penny belonged to Cæsar; the man, stamped with the image of Almighty God, belongs to Him. Our Lord does not say that that which is Cæsar's may not be associated with that which is God's, but He makes the distinction clear and definite. And yet, in the confounding these two, and in promulgating their confusion, is the modern Church of Rome conspicuous. Is the present amiable old gentleman, the Pontiff at Rome, a civil or a religious authority? Does he claim as his possession souls of men or acres of land? Does he bind men with his anathemas or with chains? Does he thunder from the Vatican spiritual injunctions or civil decrees? A Roman Catholic will answer "Both." And how far does his sway extend? "Wherever there are Catholic souls" is the reply; and "Catholic acres" too is understood. And herein is the strange mixture of civil with religious power; so that there is tendered to the

* Vide Appendix B.

would-be descendant of St. Peter alike that which belongs to God and that which belongs to Cæsar.

But I would that this morning we clearly understood that which is Cæsar's, that we may render him his dues; and above all things, that we may understand that which is God's, that we may render to His Eternal Majesty that which is due thereto. If Rome does not distinguish between the two: we must distinguish for her. We must clearly recognize that the Pope claims *two* different kinds of power—civil and spiritual; that over the bodies and lands of men, and that over their souls and consciences; that he *does* make these claims in his own territory, that he *may* make the claim in other lands. As a *temporal* Cæsar does he demand the allegiance of the Roman Italians? I see nothing but their own refusal to be ruled by him, which will prevent their rendering to him the obedience which is due from Romans to a Cæsar. Does he demand their *spiritual* allegiance, it is a question whether they should render to him that which belongs to *God alone*.

But should this Cæsar of Rome demand the lands of those spiritually allied to him, and the temporal subjection of those on their lands, *their* obedience as subjects to a monarch and their *lands* as those of tenants due to a feudal lord, should not the Christian Englishman reply, "I render to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, *and you are not my Cæsar*;" in other words, "I hold my civil rights, privileges and lands directly from the government under which I reside, and not to the *foreign* Court of Rome," for the Court of Rome is a foreigner and invader in every other portion of the globe than within her own dominions. Whether it be here in Canada, or in England, or elsewhere, is it not plain that to yield unreserved allegiance and broad acres of land to the Pope of Rome, or his representatives, is to have one's eyes blinded to the fact that that allegiance and those acres are being yielded to a *foreign* power, to a *foreign* Cæsar, and not to the power which is

ordained of God within the realm. And so our Articles of the Church of England, in accordance, as we think, with Scripture, tells us "that the Queen's Majesty hath power in this realm of England and other her dominions, unto whom the chief Government of *all Estates* of the Realm, whether they be *Ecclesiastical or Civil* doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any FOREIGN jurisdiction." Again, the same Article* strictly states, "The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in the realm of England." Do not these announcements read strangely side by side with Rome's claims to infallibility and her pretensions to temporal power in European and other countries? For, my brethren, you cannot but be conscious that for large landed proprietors such as the Marquis of Bute and the Marquis of Ripon, Lord Clifford and others to fall under the terrible belief of the infallibility of the Bishop of Rome, is *practically* to tender him allegiance—is *practically* to grant him jurisdiction—is *practically*, sooner or later, at the bidding of that "infallible" foreign potentate, to alienate themselves, their tenants and their lands from their lawful Sovereign and Cæsar, the Queen and Her heirs, and to transfer them to the Pope and to his successors, who claim for themselves divine and civil right combined. Think for yourselves as men who, thank God, still retain in their grip the supreme right of private judgment, whether these things are so or not, and whether Rome is not demanding an unjust and an iniquitous thing in claiming infallibility in her Chief Ruler and temporal power in other lands for his successors? It may be easy for Archbishop Manning to win from some a statement of their loyal citizenship, but the very Rome which has known how once to *disclaim* temporal power and how again to *claim* it, is the *same* Rome, the "*semper eadem*" which well knows how *now* to allow to English and other citizens the right to place

* Art. xxxvii. Book of Common Prayer.

themselves under the allegiance of their lawful Sovereigns and then *presently* to repudiate that allegiance for that of Rome. As Mr. Gladstone has but lately remarked, "Rome knows how to wait:" but England should know how to *decide*. Nor can we, whose hearts still yearn for the Mother-country, and for whom the language of the Psalmist with reference to his country is not exaggerated in our own case, "If I forget thee let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth," "if I do not prefer thee above my chief joy," we cannot gaze across the blue waters and see our Mother-country forgetting to render to herself and her rulers that which is due without feeling a pang of sorrow, and at the same time a blush of shame.

My time has nearly gone, and there remains yet much to be said on "Render to God the things that are God's." How far any Roman Catholic does this in yielding his right of private judgment into the hands of another, equally fallible and yet called infallible, I dare not say. In the multitude of counsellors there is safety, and the discreet learning and calm wisdom of the early united Councils of Christendom have been marked by the steady adherence of all true Churches to her wise decisions. But even to these Councils we do not grant a fawning obedience, but a hearty and intellectual acquiescence. Our consent marks their Catholicity, and their Catholicity does not compel our consent. How far any Roman Catholic can honestly declare that he holds the later dogmas of the *Catholic* Church, when they are at best but those of a part of the Church, I do not venture to say, but this I would ask him, seeing, as I have seen, the infidelity of the *men* to their principles, and the superstition of the women in their religious exercises, in Continental European cities: "Are you personally sure and convinced that you are rendering to *God* that which is

God's?" The talents he has given you, your discriminating intellect, your loving heart, your warm appreciation of beauty, your love of unity, your admiration of order, are these rendered, *returned* as belonging to Him, not to the Church, not to the Priest, not to the Pope, not to St. Peter himself, but to God? If, in the still small voice of your conscience, you can truthfully say to yourself, "I render these to God; I have exercised my conscience to God; I desire to render spiritual worship to God; I dedicate, I consecrate my whole being to God;" then it is not ours to judge you, but to leave you in His loving and compassionate hands, Who sees the secrets of all hearts.

It is time for us to turn our glance to ourselves, and to let it be more scrutinizing than with our fellow-man, over whom we do not pronounce a harsh judgment or venture an unkind word. In His light have we striven to see light, and to read of passing events by the Pillar of fire, which attends us during our night of travel onwards to the Land of Light and of Promise. Are we sure for ourselves that we are making this clear distinction which we would fain see in others, between Cæsar and God? A civil life is much, a life wherein the laws are obeyed and the duty to our fellow-man is observed, is good for this world; but O, my brethren, it is just possible that Cæsar may have his dues and God be robbed of his. On you each is stamped, as much as ever Cæsar's image was stamped upon the penny piece, the image of God. Though blurred by your own sin, for we need not go so far as to refer to Adam's, there is still the image of God in faint lines upon your soul. You are His by creation, many of you are His by the sacred dedication to Him in baptism. Are you His by yielding yourselves to Him who has redeemed you? Are you rendering to God that which is God's? Are you rendering him a heart which is made to love the Highest, and which will be for ever unhappy till

it has loved Him? Are you rendering Him, giving *Him back* that life for which the Son of God died upon the Cross? Are you rendering to Him your bodies, souls and spirits as your reasonable service? Are you rendering to Him * *one-tenth* even of all you possess to be used for the poor in prison, in sickness, in hunger, and in thirst? Do not, I pray you, listen as to a pleasing and soothing song, but *act* upon practical words. From this side of the Atlantic even, a Church living in *actual power* of a consecrated life, men and women giving heartily yet discriminately to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, and to God that which is God's, may be, by their influence, stemming the rapid tide of pretension and arrogance in a Church claiming infallibility amidst the most pitiable exhibitions of error, and preventing the bulwarks of England, which have so long withstood the boisterous waves of Rome's noisy claims, from being carried away by this latest tidal wave from Rome, swelled by the surging winds of the Vatican. I cannot do better than conclude in Gladstone's words: "The State will, I trust, be ever careful to leave the domain of religious conscience free, and yet to keep *its own domain*, and to allow neither private caprice, nor above all, foreign arrogance, to dictate to it in the discharge of its proper office." May the God of all wisdom preserve our beloved Motherland and her institutions in the perfect use of freedom, the just exercise of privilege, and the full sway of righteousness, to His honour and glory. AMEN.

* Matt. **xxv.** 35.

APPENDICES.

A.

SINCE the preaching of the above sermon, the writer has lighted on the following report from the *Times*, reprinted in the *Mail* of November 9, 1874. It must be remembered that Dr. Manning is herein speaking before Mr. Gladstone's Pamphlet had appeared "on the Vatican Decrees in their relation to Civil Allegiance." We place side by side Dr. Manning's utterances *before* the appearance of the Pamphlet, and *afterwards*, and let any honest mind reconcile, if he can, their contrary statements with a belief in Dr. Manning's future declarations :

Archbishop Manning, at a large meeting of Roman Catholics, assembled at his house on Thursday evening, Nov. 5, delivered an address to the Roman Catholic Academia *in reference to the future policy of the Catholic world*. Thirteen years ago, he said, it was found necessary to extend the work of the Association in England, and he was glad to say they had done much to correct and educate the press of England. In the present crisis, and looking to the coming great future struggle, they had a vast work before them.

Looking at the hostility manifested on the Continent to the Sovereign Pontiff, he invited their special attention to the best means of asserting the Pope's infallibility and his right to spiritual and temporal power. One thing he would call their attention to, namely, that since his temporal power on the Continent had been denied him, *his spiritual power and influence over his subjects had greatly increased*. Commenting upon the proposed system of international arbitration discussed at the recent Conference at Geneva, he said that there could be but *one authorized arbitrator* between the nations of the earth, and that one was the one who was not interested in the temporal affairs of one nation more than another, but was impartial to all, and that was the Sovereign Pontiff himself. Other questions, which he invited their most serious consideration to, were the *infallibility of the Holy Father*, his right to *temporal* as well as spiritual authority, and, amidst all the conflicting opinions of the world, the ultimate necessity of acknowledging *civil allegiance to him as their only safety*. Within the last twenty-four hours it had been intimated to him that the Catholic world was threatened with a controversy on the whole of the decrees of the Vatican Council. From this and other matters that had come to his knowledge, he could see that they were on the very eve of one of the mightiest controversies the

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religious world has ever seen. Certainly nothing like the controversy on which they were about to enter had taken place during the last three hundred years, and they must be prepared. If they would only prepare themselves he did not fear for the decrees of the Vatican Council or for the Vatican itself. But they must have no half-hearted measures. *They must have no half-fearful, half-hearted assertion of the Sovereign Pontiff's claims.* They must not fear to declare to England, and to the world, through the free press of England, the Sovereign Pontiff's *claims to infallibility, his right to temporal power, and the duty of the nations of the earth, to return to their allegiance to him.* If they did this, if they proclaimed this with no uncertain sound, the Protestants of England and Protestants throughout the world would hear them and be convinced. If they did this, the Protestant would give them credit for their courage, and believe in them for their own honesty's sake. If, on the other hand, they minced matters, and spoke in half-fearful measures, Protestants would only turn away from them for their want of honesty. Protestants knew well what they meant and what the claims of the Catholic Church were, and therefore it would be best for the Church now to speak out, and he had no fear for the result.

[Before the appearance of Mr. Gladstone's Pamphlet, Thurs. 5th Nov., 1874.]

There is an "ultimate necessity of acknowledging civil allegiance to the Pope as their only safety."

"They must have no half-fearful, half-hearted assertion of the Sovereign Pontiff's claims."

"They must not fear to declare the duty of the nations of the earth to return to their allegiance to the Pope."

[After the same, Monday, 9th Nov., 1874.]

"The civil allegiance of Catholics is as undivided as that of all Christians."

"The loyalty of our civil allegiance is not in spite of the teaching of the Catholic Church, but because of it."

It may be noticed that consistent with the Roman Catholic doctrine of reservation, Dr. Manning does not say (after the appearance of Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet) to whom the civil allegiance is due, while he of course, holds as *Christians only* those who are Roman Catholics, while (before the appearance of the pamphlet) he is always anxious to state "civil allegiance to the Pope, return to their allegiance to the Pope." Who can doubt that Dr. Manning means that the *only* allegiance for a Roman Catholic is to His Holiness and to the Powers under Him? Never was the saying "Qui s'excuse s'accuse" truer than in the Roman Bishop's cautious and *reservative* apology. Modern Rome only lacks of mediæval Rome her straightforwardness, which arose, not from principle, but from Power.

B.

Mr. Gladstone also writes: "Our Saviour had recognized as distinct the two provinces of the civil rule and the Church, but nowhere intimated that the spiritual authority was to claim the disposal of physical force, and to control in its own domain the authority which is alone responsible for external peace, order, and safety among civilized communities of men."

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